



“Serving on the Public Arts Commission is a perfect marriage of both my interests and my passion.”

Tamara Kenworthy
Chair, Public Arts Advisory Commission

Art is an essential part of our everyday lives and a great opportunity to reflect our community values of creativity and diversity. The Public Arts Advisory Commission is tasked with developing a permanent art collection, curating temporary exhibitions and promoting public arts education and civic engagement programs throughout our city. Meet Tamara Kenworthy, chair of the Public Arts Advisory Commission and one of our city’s most ardent art champions.

Why do you serve on the West Des Moines Public Arts Advisory Commission?

Tamara: I’m passionate about all the arts – visual and performance. I started dancing as a young girl and grew to love the arts and I love our community. Serving on the commission is a perfect marriage of both my interests and my passion.

Why are the arts important to a community?

The arts are a critical component to defining quality of life. Public art reflects the fabric of a community. Public art can educate, create beauty, and expand our understanding of ourselves. It engages residents of all ages whether on a bike trail or by the public library.

What’s your favorite piece of public art in WDM?

‘Art on the Trails’ – The first installation developed by our Commission to be included in our permanent art collection. It is a series of five stainless steel sculptures featuring different animals installed along the bike trail. They are whimsical, invite resident engagement and stimulate education for our children.

Is this your first volunteering experience?

Oh no. I grew up in Boone, Iowa and watched my mother volunteer. I started volunteering as a young professional and have loved every minute of it over the past 30 years.

This is the first time I’ve served on a city commission board and I was so excited because it aligned well with my passion and my values of giving back to the community.

How much time do you spend on the Public Arts Advisory Commission?

I imagined it was going to involve time and commitment and I wasn’t wrong. But, that’s OK, because having a passion for what we do is very important. There are seven commissioners and we meet once a month though we also serve on several committees. We have a lot of projects in the works.

What experience or specific skills do you need to volunteer on the Public Arts Advisory Commission?

There are no specific requirements to be a commissioner or a volunteer on the Public Arts Advisory Commission, and I encourage anyone interested in the arts to serve on a committee or [apply to become a commissioner](#). This year, a high school student is serving on one of our art selection committees and she’s doing a great job!

What is your day job?

I am the President and founder of On Point Strategies, a strategic planning, research, and marketing firm located in West Des Moines.

What’s on your bucket list?

Paris, London, Beijing, Sydney...the list goes on!

What is your guilty pleasure?

I like to slip on my tap dancing shoes and take a tap class.

